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USED UP.

Sir C. [*Feeling his pulse.*] An unquestionable pulsation! this is what I wanted—yes, my heart beats fast.

Act I. Scene I.

THE MINOR DRAMA.

No. VI.

USED UP.

A PETIT COMEDY

IN TWO ACTS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF "L'HOMME BLASE"

BY CHARLES ^{James} MATHEWS.

//

WITH THE STAGE BUSINESS, CAST OF CHARACTERS
RELATIVE POSITIONS, ETC.

NEW YORK:

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION.

THE present (and only published) edition of the petit comedy of "Used Up," is an excellent adaptation from the French of "*L'Homme Blasé*," by Charles Mathews, Esq., having been translated by that gentleman as well on account of its intrinsic merit, as for its peculiar fitness to his abilities for representing the hero of the piece, *Sir Charles Coldstream*. It is needless to say, that he acted it to the very life.

The character of *Sir Charles*, excepting that as a matter of course it is somewhat exaggerated, is truthfully and beautifully drawn. The utter *ennui* of a man, who, having no definite end in view but to kill time, has exhausted every source of pleasure and excitement; his mental inanity; his apparent physical imbecility, notwithstanding that on excitement he proves himself to be no unworthy boaster of being the favourite pupil of the veteran pugilist, Cribb; the voraciousness of his appetite in the second act, when he is compelled to assume the appearance and functions of a plough-boy—are all depicted by the hand of a master. The part of *Ironbrace*, also, is very effective; whilst that of *Mary* portrays some of the finest qualities that belong to her sex.

This piece was first produced in New York at the Olympic Theatre in October, 1846. Mr. Walcot, as *Sir Charles*, was, in the first act, in his element—Mathews himself could have desired nothing better; whilst Nickinson, as *Ironbrace*, presented a portraiture of exceeding graphic accuracy.

"Used Up" can scarcely fail to be one of our most popular afterpieces, now that it has been placed in the hands of the public. For the opportunity to do this, we have to acknowledge our obligations to Mr. Mitchell, to whose kindness we are indebted for the MS. from which this edition is printed.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	<i>London Olympic, 1845.</i>	<i>N. Y. Olympic, 1847.</i>
Sir Charles Coldstream, Bart. -	Mr. C. Mathews.	Mr. Walcot.
Sir Adonis Leech - - -	" Tilbury.	" Conover.
Honourable Tom Saville - -	" Brindal.	" Clark.
Wurzel, a Farmer - - -	" Bland.	" Everard.
John Ironbrace, a Blacksmith -	" Howe.	" Nickinson
Fennel, a Lawyer - - -	" Gough.	" Levere.
James - - -	" Clark.	" Bleecker.
Lady Clutterbuck - - -	Mrs. Humby.	Mrs. H. Isherwood.
Mary Wurzel - - -	Miss J. Bennett.	Miss Roberts.

The Costumes are those of the present day. Ironbrace should wear a leather apron, and have his shirt sleeves rolled up.

Time of representation, 1 hour and 10 minutes.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*; S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; M. D. *Middle Door*

RELATIVE POSITIONS.

R., means *Right*; L., *Left*; C., *Centre*; R. C., *Right of Centre*; L. C., *Left of Centre*.

USED UP.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Saloon in Sir Charles Coldstream's House, at Kingston-upon-Thames—Window, L. S. E.—Door leading to Lawn, R. 3d E.,—door L. 3d E.—Folding doors, c., Sofa, R., Ornamental Table, &c.*

Enter JAMES, c., and IRONBRACE, from L.

James. OH, Ironbrace, you are come!

Iron. Yes, Master James; what's the job?

James. You see that window?

Iron. It's big enough.

James. It looks out upon the river, and that's where the balcony's to be.

Iron. [*Looks out.*] Ah, I see; the water flows up to the very wall.

James. This is the deepest spot in the Thames, hereabouts, of any near Kingston—I wonder no balcony has been put up before; I am sure, whenever I am obliged to open that window, (for it is Sir Charles's favourite smoking spot)—I get so giddy;—and as there's nothing there but a bar of wood—oh, if anybody should—oh!

Iron. I suppose, then, he sent for me to put up a balcony on your account.

James. Principally, I think, for he said he rather liked it himself—it was an excitement.

Iron. A what?

James. An excitement—a sensation.

Iron. I don't understand.

James. Of course not: how should you, you ignoramus?—he's always sighing for what he calls excitement—you see every thing is old to him—he's used up,—nothing amuses him—he can't feel.

Iron. Can't he? I wish I had him on my anvil for five minutes.

James. But he values my health, respects my feelings; indeed, I am more his confidant, than his valet.

Saville. [Within.] James, you scoundrel!

Iron. Scoundrel! does he mean you?

James. Ahem!—no, that's Mr. Saville's voice. Sir Charles, you see, is lunching within, with a few friends, and amongst friends, you know—

Leech. [Putting his head out, c.] James, you rascal, if you don't bring that claret, I'll pitch you out of that window! [Retires.]

Iron. Very free and easy! why don't you return the joke, and fling the tongs at him?

James. This completes the first dozen. [Opens c. d. and discovers Sir Chas., Leech, and Saville, at table.]

Sir C. James, bring in the *patés de foie gras*, which arrived from France last week.

Leech. I rise to propose an amendment.

All. Hear! hear!

Leech. That after the words, "bring in the *paté de foie gras*," shall be added, "and another case of champagne."

All. Ah! ah! hear, hear!

Sir C. With all my heart.—James, champagne!

[The doors are closed.]

Iron. Happy set of devils, those rich fellows are; they eat one half their money, drink the other half, and give the rest to the poor. That's the trade I should like, only I haven't got the right tools to follow it.

Enter MARY, L.

Mary. No one here?—oh, Mr. Ironbrace, is that you?

Iron. What, little Mary, niece of old Farmer Wurzel, of Copse Hill,—how dost do, lass? how's your worthy uncle? he's an old friend of mine. I suppose you have come here to Sir Charles to pay your uncle's rent, eh?

Mary. No—my mother was his nurse, and was very fond of him,—indeed, Sir Charles and me used to play together, in this very room, some years ago; but I suppose he has forgotten me by this time.

Iron. Very likely, or grown ashamed of you, perhaps.

Mary. No, no, for he is too generous and kind for that.

When he heard my mother was ill, (for the Steward wrote him word of it)—though he was somewhere abroad, I don't know where, but very far away, he sent to her to say, that she should have whatever she wanted—she borrowed £20,—ah!—[*Sighs.*] Then she died!

Iron. Did she require £20 to die with?

Mary. No, it was to pay the doctor's bill.

Iron. Oh, I see: he got £20 for the killing of her.

Mary. I have made up the sum by shillings and sixpences, and have brought it here to pay him.

Iron. Come, that's honest, however!

Mary. Besides, I have been educated at his expense, because I was his foster-sister. I can read, and write, and love music, and—

Iron. And therefore, of course, hate churning, and washing, and darning, and—

Mary. No, no, I love them, for 'twas by such means I made up this sum to pay him back again. It's a great blessing to be quick at one's needle, Mr. Ironbrace.

Iron. Is it?—I can't say—I never worked at it, but I have often heard talk about it,—much *too* often. And now you live with your uncle, eh?

Mary. Yes: he's sometimes a little cross, but very good to me.

Iron. Ah! I wish I had met you, Mary, about a twelve-month ago, I should now have been a man of substance, instead of the poor devil you see me.

Mary. Indeed!

Iron. Yes, I should have married you, instead of ruining myself for one who—no matter. Ah, Mary, I have had a severe trial; I have had a blow I shall never recover,—a blow that would have felled an ox; but I was rock—I survived it!

Mary. A blow!

Iron. Ay, a blow! not from a man; no, no, I flatter myself no man dare try that game with John Ironbrace! no, 'twas a woman who dealt it me.

Mary. A woman!

Iron. Yes, she was a milliner, in a great house in Piccadilly; at that time I had a good Iron Foundry in Druvy Lane; till one fatal night I met her at a ball—

Mary. Oh! a ball!

Iron. Yes, at White Conduit Gardens; and before I had looked twice at her, her eyes made two holes in my heart as clean as a punch. For eight months I courted her; till at last, 'twas agreed we should be welded.

Mary. Wedded, you mean.

Iron. It's welded, in my trade—when, after spending a honeymoon of three months, the very first time I had occasion to leave town, hang me, if she didn't run away!

Mary. And didn't you follow her?

Iron. Ah, I wish I hadn't, for I neglected my business to hunt every corner in London for her—though I might as well have looked for a needle in a bottle of hay; till at last I was lodged in the list of bankrupts, and here I am a poor blacksmith, instead of a master founder. But only—[*Clenches his fist,*] let me catch the fellow who has played me false!—

Mary. Why agitate yourself any more about a woman who did not love you?

Iron. Not love me? she doated on me!

Mary. And yet she left you?

Iron. She didn't—I won't believe it—she must have been carried off—she's a prisoner somewhere now!

Mary. D'ye think so?

Iron. I am sure of it. [*Gets gradually enraged.*] There's some scoundrel at the bottom of it all! I don't know who he is, nor what's his name; but if ever I clap my fist upon him, hammer and tongs! but he shall remember it!

Mary. Oh, Mr. Ironbrace, you should not be so passionate!

Iron. I'm not passionate! I'm quite cool!—But only let me get one thump at him!

Mary. Mr. Ironbrace!

Iron. He shall take it for the kick of a young horse; he shall say—

Mary. Oh!—

Iron. Stand out of my way—no! I beg pardon, not you, Mary—did I frighten you?—you have nothing to do with it—no, no, it isn't you—

Mary. You should'nt go on so, Mr. Ironbrace.

Iron. [*Violently.*] I can't help it, it's my nature!

Re-enter JAMES, C.

James. Sir Charles is coming—Ironbrace, you must postpone your job for an hour or so.

Mary. But I want to see him.

James. You!—what an idea!—run away with you, directly!

Mary. But where am I to go?

James. Where you like, only you can't stay here; go to the kitchen, or to the garden, or any place you can find, so that you go out of this.

Mary. I won't go till I have seen him, that I am determined.

Iron. That's right, lass; I like your spirit. Come, we'll go together, and I'll tell you all my sorrows over again,—*[Takes her arm,]* it does me good to unload my heart to you; it eases me; and one day I shall fall in with that scoundrel—and then, hammer and tongs!

Mary. Oh, you hurt my arm!

Iron. Oh, I beg pardon: I fancied I had hold of him.

[Exeunt, R. U. E.]

Enter SIR CHARLES, SIR A. LEECH, HON. TOM SAVILLE, C.
all laughing except Sir Charles.

Sav. Ha! ha! ha! Come, Leech, confess.

Sir C. James, cigars in the billiard room.—*[To guests.]* We'll join you directly. Come, Leech, your confession.

Leech. With all my heart. I don't care, why should I? she was more than a match for me, and I own it. She was the wife of an ironmonger, or some vulgar thing of the sort—she caught my fancy one day in Long Acre, and my valet, who manages these matters for me, found out her abode, watched the husband out of town, and then hastening to the wife, with the news of his sudden death, the bait took, and she followed him to the spot where the accident was said to have occurred.

Sav. Where, instead of the husband, she found—

Leech. Me!—popped her into a carriage and four, and galloped off with her.

Sav. Bravo! Victory!

Leech. Not at all: she was in my house above a month, and although she believed her husband dead and buried too at my expense, she would not listen to me as a lover,

but asked me if my intentions were honourable—ha! ha! ha!

Sav. Ho! ho! ho!

Leech. But you don't laugh, Coldstream! come, man, be amused for once in your life—you don't laugh.

Sir C. Oh, yes, I do, *mon cher*.—You mistake, I laughed twice distinctly—only the fact is, I am bored to death.

Leech. Bored? what! after such a *dejeuner* as that you have given us? Look at me, I'm inspired—I'm in the seventh heaven of delight!

Sav. You drank more champagne than any of us, and yet you are as dull as a funeral—you are not elated by it.

Sir C. Not the least in the world: why should I? I've drank so much of it in my time—I know it by heart—there's nothing in it.

Leech. Nothing in it! every thing's in it—I'm a King at this moment, and all the world is at my feet.

Sir C. My dear Leech, you began life late—you are a young fellow—forty-five—and have the world yet before you—I started at thirteen, lived quick, and exhausted the whole round of pleasure before I was thirty. I've tried every thing, heard every thing, done every thing, know every thing, and here I am, a man at thirty-three, literally used up—completely *blazé*.

Leech. Nonsense, man!—used up, indeed!—with your wealth, with your little heaven in Spring Gardens, and your paradise here at Kingston-upon-Thames,—

Sav. With twenty estates in the sunniest spots in England.

Leech. Not to mention that Utopia, within four walls, in the *Rue de Provence*, in Paris. Oh, the nights we've spent there—eh, Tom?

Sav. Ah!

Sir C. I'm dead with *ennui*.

Leech. *Ennui*! do you hear him, Tom? poor Cræsus!

Sir C. Cræsus!—no, I'm no Cræsus. My father—you've seen his portrait, good old fellow—he certainly did leave me a little matter of £12,000 a year, but after all—

Leech. & Sav. Oh, come!—

Sir C. Oh, I don't complain of it.

Leech. I should think not.

Sir C. Oh, no, there are some people who can manage to do on less—on credit.

Leech. I know several—

Sav. My dear Coldstream, you should try change of scene.

Sir C. I have tried it—what's the use?

Leech. But I'd gallop all over Europe.

Sir C. I have—there's nothing in it.

Leech. Nothing in all Europe!

Sir C. Nothing—oh, dear, yes! I remember, at one time I did somehow go about, a good deal.

Sav. You should go to Switzerland.

Sir C. I have been—nothing there—people say so much about every thing—there certainly were a few glaciers, some monks, and large dogs, and thick ankles, and bad wine, and Mont Blanc; yes, and there was ice on the top too; but I prefer the ice at Gunter's—less trouble, and more in it.

Leech. Then if Switzerland would'nt do, I'd try Italy.

Sir C. My dear Leech, I've tried it over and over again, and what then?

Sav. Did not Rome inspire you?

Sir C. [*Crosses to c.*] Oh, believe me, Tom, a most horrible hole! People talk so much about these things—there's the Colosseum, now—round, very round, a goodish ruin enough, but I was disappointed with it; Capitol—tolerable high; and St. Peter's—marble, and mosaics, and fountains, dome certainly not badly scooped, but there was nothing in it.

Leech. Come, Coldstream, you must admit we have nothing like St. Peter's in London.

Sir C. No, because we don't want it; but if we wanted such a thing, of course we should have it. A dozen gentlemen meet, pass resolutions, institute, and in twelve months it would be run up; nay, if that were all, we'd buy St. Peter's itself, and have it sent over.

Leech. Ha, ha! well said, you're quite right.

Sav. What say you to beautiful Naples?

Leech. Ay, *La Belle Napoli*?

Sir C. Not bad,—excellent water melons, and goodish opera; they took me up Vesuvius—a horrid bore; it smoked a good deal, certainly, but altogether a wretched

mountain;—saw the crater—looked down, but there was nothing in it.

Sav. But the bay?

Sir C. Inferior to Dublin.

Leech. The Campagna.

Sir C. A swamp!

Sav. Greece?

Sir C. A morass!

Leech. Athens?

Sir C. A bad Edinburgh!

Sav. Egypt?

Sir C. A desert!

Leech. The Pyramids?

Sir C. Humbugs!—nothing in any of them! Have done—you bore me.

Leech. But you enjoyed the hours we spent in Paris, at any rate?

Sir C. No; the danseuse was too approachable, and my friend's wife gave me too much trouble. I was dying for excitement—gambling gave me none, and woman no longer interested me. In fact, I've no appetite, no thirst; every thing wearies me—no, they fatigue me.

Leech. Fatigue you!—I should think not, indeed; you are as strong as a lion.

Sir C. But as quiet as a lamb—that was Tom Cribb's character of me: you know I was a favourite pupil of his. I swear I'd give a thousand pounds for any event that would make my pulse beat ten to the minute faster.—Is it possible, that between you both you cannot invent something that would make my blood boil in my veins,—my hair stand on end—my heart beat—my pulse rise—that would produce an excitement—an emotion—a sensation—a palpitation—but, no!—

Leech. I've an idea!

Sir C. You?

Sav. What is it?

Leech. Marry!

Sir C. Hum!—well, not bad, there's novelty about the notion; it never did strike me to—oh, but, no: I should be bored with the exertion of choosing—if a wife now could be had like a dinner—for ordering.

Leech. She can, by you—take the first woman that comes: on my life, she'll not refuse £12,000 a-year.

Sir C. Come, I don't dislike the project; I almost feel something like a sensation coming. I haven't felt so excited for some time: it's a novel enjoyment—a surprise! I'll try it.

Enter JAMES, L.

James. Lady Clutterbuck, Sir Charles, to wait upon you.

All. Ha! ha! now's your time.

Sir C. Clutterbuck!—who's that?

James. Our neighbour, sir.

Sir C. Is she a widow?

James. I don't know, sir.

Sir C. If she's a widow, shew her up; if she has a husband, shew her out. Well, sir, why do you hesitate?

James. Beg pardon, sir, but I never knew you object to a husband before.

Sir C. Begone.

[Exit James, L.]

Sav. Why, you don't mean to say—

Sir C. I do, so away with you.

Leech. Quite right—the letter of the law—the first that comes—success to Clutterbuck!

Sir C. Away with you, then! *[Exeunt Leech and Saville, R., laughing and closing door after them.]*

Enter JAMES, L.

James. Lady Clutterbuck.

[Exit, L.]

Enter LADY CLUTTERBUCK, L.

Sir C. She is a widow, then.

Lady C. Sir Charles Coldstream, I presume. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, and I believe you have not the honour of knowing me.

Sir C. *[Aside.]* A good beginning.—*[Aloud.]* May I take the liberty of inquiring, madam—but pardon me—first, I believe, you are a widow?

Lady C. Yes, sir.—*[Aside.]* How very odd!

Sir C. Then permit me to offer you a chair.—*[Aside.]* I can't propose so abruptly. *[They sit.]*

Lady C. Sir Charles, we will proceed to business.

Sir C. *[Feeling his pulse.]* No sensation as yet, my pulse is calm!

Lady C. I ventured to intrude upon your generosity,

Sir Charles, in favour of our infant school ;—the girls are sadly in want of blue mittens, and the boys of corderoy—a—a—corderoys—any subscription most gratefully acknowledged in the Morning Post.

Sir C. [*With his hand on his pulse.*] No, not the slightest effect.

Lady C. I beg you won't say that, Sir Charles.

Sir C. Might I ask, madam—we are neighbours, I believe ?

Lady C. My house is close to yours—a mere cottage, but I remain there with pleasure, as it was there I lost my poor husband.

Sir C. I understand—the pleasures of memory ;—and have we bachelors suffered for any length of time the disgrace of your widowhood ?

Lady C. Sir !

Sir C. I say, madam, is it long that you have enjoyed your misfortune ?

Lady C. Oh, a considerable period.

Sir C. A good match, the lamented Clutterbuck ?

Lady C. Ah—h, sir, I have been wedded twice.

Sir C. The devil !

Lady C. My first, poor Ironbrace, wooed me from a flourishing business in town.

Sir C. Musical ?

Lady C. No, millinery ; he was an ironfounder,—not handsome, but—

Sir C. Good ?

Lady C. No, sir, wealthy ; while I had nothing to offer him, as dowry, but my virtue.

Sir C. Ah ! little enough !

Lady C. Sir !

Sir C. I simply remarked, that in this money-making age, mere virtue—unfortunately—but pray proceed.

Lady C. Three months after marriage, news reached me of his death. I immediately quitted London with what fortune I possessed, to hide my tears at a watering place, where I met Sir Stephen Clutterbuck, a little wizened old gentleman, who wore powder ; but one couldn't look upon that as a physical objection, you know, sir—

Sir C. On the contrary, madam.

Lady C. He offered me his hand and heart—a heart of five-and-fifty is rather—

Sir C. Tough!

Lady C. A hand of half a century seemed to me a—

Sir C. A paw—I catch the idea! well, you sighed, thought of your unprotected state, and took the heart and the—

Lady C. Exactly; besides, he kept his carriage, and his family was good—his name a pretty one—you think Clutterbuck a pretty one, don't you, sir?

Sir C. *Distingue*, madam.

Lady C. When, what, sir, do you think I discovered, a week after our marriage?

Sir C. That he had a ready-made family.

Lady C. Worse, sir!

Sir C. A couple of other wives?

Lady C. Worse again—sir, he hadn't a sixpence.

Sir C. Just now, you said he had a carriage.

Lady C. So he had, but no horses—'twas only jobbed.

Sir C. Oh, *Corpo di Bacco*,—then 'twas a swindle!

Lady C. He soothed my indignation—for he had a good heart withal—by making me the only atonement in his power.

Sir C. I see—he left the country.

Lady C. No, he died.

Sir C. Better still.

Lady C. Yes. However, notwithstanding his behaviour, I mourned him the regular time.

Sir C. It does honour to your head and heart, madam.

Lady C. [*She rises.*] But in your delightful conversation, I forgot the object of my visit.

Sir C. [*Puts chairs up.*] Your pardon: my steward will give you a check for twenty guineas.

Lady C. You are generosity itself—good morning, Sir Charles.

Sir C. Permit me; delighted to have made the acquaintance of so lovely a neighbour—farewell. [*Rings bell, exit Lady C., L.—Yawns.*] Rather an odd woman, that, and rather amusing for a short time—but stay—by Jove, I forgot to propose to her.—[*Runs up.*] Hollo! [*Calls.*] I beg pardon, madam—yes—you—madam!—one moment, if you please—[*Comes down.*] She's coming—positively, she amused me so, that she drove the idea of marriage out of my head.

Re-enter LADY CLUTTERBUCK, L.

Lady C. Sir Charles—

Sir C. I beg ten thousand pardons—I omitted to mention a small matter—a—a—you—you—are positively very good looking still.

Lady C. Oh, Sir Charles!

Sir C. I never pay compliments; but of all the women I ever adored, (that is, the days when I did adore,) out of about two hundred, I may say, who have possessed my heart, there were several who could not in justice compare with you.

Lady C. You are very polite, I'm sure, Sir Charles.

Sir C. Do me the favour to look at me—observe me critically—how old am I?

Lady C. Dear me, how odd!—I should say about seven or eight and twenty.

Sir C. Lady Clutterbuck, do you remember the comet of 1811?

Lady C. The comet?

Sir C. You cannot be old enough,—don't answer, perhaps the question is indelicate;—but if that comet still existed, we should be precisely of the same age.

Lady C. You and I, Sir Charles?

Sir C. No, madam; I and the comet.

[Lady C. counts her fingers.]

—I am thirty-three, madam.

Lady C. Is this what you called me back to tell me, Sir Charles?

Sir C. It was, madam.

Lady C. Oh!

Sir C. Madam, I am by nature melancholy.

Lady C. You?—why you have been saying all manner of funny things to me, this half hour.

Sir C. You are mistaken: they were melancholy truths, positively. Why, 'twas only last week I made my will, left all my property amongst some friends, who are now on a visit here, before I carried out a fancy I had entertained for some time, of hanging myself on a tree.

Lady C. Hanging yourself on a tree!

Sir C. Or throwing myself into the river: I've a window here convenient—the water flows to the wall.

Lady C. Oh, you are joking!

Sir C. But since I have seen you my mind is changed: I have taken up another fancy, one in which you can assist me.

Lady C. [*Aside.*] What does he mean?—me!

Sir C. You! listen: I have a house in town—estates in the three kingdoms, and one for a freak in the Isle of Man—I've a shooting box on the banks of the Mississippi; three carriages—a—with horses—£12,000 a-year, and I offer you my hand.

Lady C. Your hand to me!

Sir C. I am, as I have told you, only thirty-three; and according to the highest female authorities, this cannot be designated a *pau*—[*Holds out his hand.*]—will you accept it?

Lady C. Sir Charles, you amaze me! is this intended for a declaration of love?

Sir C. Quite the contrary—it is a proposal of marriage.

Lady C. But—

Sir C. Excuse me, I have had so much love-making in my time, I am sick of it—there's nothing in it—the same thing over and over again—I prefer coming to the point at once: will you have me?—if you accept me, you will do me a favour, and I shall be able to say, I have a charming wife; if you refuse me, it will be precisely the—I shall then simply say, I have a charming neighbour.—Turn it over in your mind, my dear lady—excuse my memory—give it your serious reflection; and pray don't allow my violent arguments to alarm you into matrimony.

Enter MARY at back, R.

Mary. There he is.

Sir C. Who's that?

Mary. 'Tis I, Sir Charles—Mary Wurzel,—you remember little Mary?

Sir C. [*Crosses to her.*] Perfectly: you were my college bedmaker.

Mary. No—do you forget twelve years ago?

Sir C. Twelve years ago—forget!—is there any human being can remember twelve years ago?—the exertion must be Herculean—my dear, do you think my brain a Parish Register, or the minutes of the House of Lords

Lady C. Go, child, don't you see Sir Charles is busy at this moment?

Mary. [*Aside.*] He forgets me—Ironbrace was right—I came, sir, to pay a debt.

Sir C. A debt! that was twelve years ago, I suppose—don't remember it. Good morning.

Mary. But my mother, sir—

Sir C. Give her my regards, and say I'm engaged—
[*To Lady C.*] In ten minutes I will return to know if I am to be, or not to be—whether husband, or neighbour?

Lady C. Ten minutes!—that's sudden.

Sir C. Twelve, if you like—oh, take your own time, I entreat; don't hurry on my account.

Mary. What does he say? [*He goes up, humming an air, suddenly stops and returns.*]

Sir C. Lady Clutterbuck—with horses! [*Exit, c.*]

Mary. Pray, madam, might I pay this money to you, on Sir Charles's account?

Lady C. In a few days you may—we are not married yet.

Mary. Married! and to you?

Lady C. Can you oppose any objection, moral, physical, or legal.

Mary. [*Aside.*] Dear me, what a strange effect this news has upon me; and yet it is quite natural he should marry, of course. I ought to rejoice, but I did not expect to find him so changed—how I have thought of him, ay, every day, and he could not even remember me—thought I was his college bed-maker!

Lady C. [*Aloud, but to herself.*] Hum!—of course I shall accept him, he's handsome—

Mary. Oh, very—I hope, madam, you will take great care of him; he's very melancholy sometimes, and then you must be sure and—

Lady C. Heyday, child!—are you going to instruct me how to take care of a husband?—what is your business here?

Enter SIR A. LEECH, R.

Leech. Where is Sir Charles?

Lady C. Sir Adonis Leech!

Leech. Mrs. Ironbrace, by all that's cruel!

Mary. Ironbrace!

Leech. Have you forgiven me yet? [*They talk apart.*

Mary. [*Aside.*] Ironbrace!—it must be his wife, going to marry my foster-brother!—I'll run down and ask him if that's proper. I'm sure he won't allow it.

[*Exit, R. U. E.*

Leech. And you are going to marry him?

Lady C. What can I do?

Leech. [*Aside.*] I wonder if Ironbrace is still alive—no matter: if he turns up, it will make a splendid paragraph for the Post—[*Aloud.*] Where is the victim?

Lady C. He retired to that room, to relieve his anxiety during my deliberation.

Leech. Egad, we'll acquaint him with his good fortune.

Lady C. No, not yet.

Leech. Relieve his sufferings— [*Throws open c. door, Sir Charles is discovered asleep.*

Lady C. Asleep! the wretch!

Leech. Ha! ha!

Lady C. Leave us!

Leech. He's dreaming of you!—[*Sings.*] “Oh, there's nothing half so sweet in life as Love's young dream.”

[*Exit, R.*

Lady C. I'll awake him—hem! Sir Charles!

[*Shakes chair.*

Sir C. [*Starting.*] Eh—what—oh, is it you, my dear madam?—you destroyed the most delicious dream—I was dreaming of you.

Lady C. Oh!

Sir C. Yes, I dreamt that you refused me.

Lady C. But dreams go by contraries, you know, Sir Charles.

Sir C. Alas, yes.

Lady C. What!

Sir C. I meant, it was agitating—I was wretched!—but still it was something to be that—it was a sign of existence.

Lady C. Yes, Sir Charles, I awoke you, to say—

Sir C. What?

Lady C. That the ten minutes are past.

Sir C. What ten minutes?—eh—oh—ah—beg pardon; of course, I remember my proposal.

Lady C. I have considered, and—

Sir C. You refuse me—well—

[Walks to sofa and throws himself upon it.]

Lady C. I accept.

Sir C. Aha, good!—

[Puts up his legs.]

Lady C. That surprises you, I believe.

Sir C. Not in the least. We'll fix the happy day as soon as you please.

[Takes out a cigar case.]

Lady C. Is that all the effect it produces upon you, Sir Charles?

Sir C. Why, what effect would you have it pro—will you allow me?—I beg pardon, may I offer you one?

Lady C. Not before dinner, thank you.

Sir C. Perhaps you are right.

[Smokes.]

Enter IRONBRACE, R. U. E.

Iron. [Aside.] Ha! there they are at last! yes, I think that I have got him now.

Sir C. Come here, my dear; sit down beside me, and we'll talk over the matter.

Lady C. With pleasure.

Iron. No you don't.

[Between them.]

Lady C. Alive!

Iron. Yes, alive!—flesh and blood! Oh, you unfortunate, undone woman!

Sir C. It seems my intended knows this gentleman.

Lady C. What shall I do?

Iron. Yes, I—I who have sought you all the world over, now my turn is come.

Lady C. Before Sir Charles—

Sir C. Good—go on—oh, don't mind me: settle your little matters, Mr. what's-your-name?

Iron. My name!—my name is Ironbrace—I'm not ashamed of it, though I ought to be.

Sir C. Ironbrace! damme, this is the blacksmith's wife—this is going to be amusing.

Iron. And is this animal the thing for which you deserted me? this—

Sir C. [Opening his eyes.] Heyday!

Iron. This threadpaper—this fine-whiskered wig-block, that I'll flatten on the earth, like a tenpenny nail on an anvil!

Lady C. Oh, good gracious!

Sir C. My good friend, will you allow me to inquire who is the individual you propose to flatten in so agreeable a manner.

Iron. You! hammer and tongs!

Sir C. Me!—hammer and tongs!

Iron. As for you, degraded woman, I despise, and leave you to your conscience—but for you, villain!—[*Seizes Sir Charles, and drags him off sofa*]—we will settle our accounts another way.

Lady C. Oh, mercy on me!

Sir C. Don't, I beg—*Per Bacco*, this is becoming decidedly exciting! [*Feels his pulse.*] An unquestionable pulsation! This is what I wanted—yes, my heart beats fast—hem!—I think you will leave this room.

Iron. I'll give you the finest drubbing you ever got.

Lady C. I shall faint.

Sir C. Pray don't, till I polish off your friend, I entreat.—[*To Ironbrace.*] Leave the room, or I must force you out.

Iron. Force me!

Sir C. Leave the room, I say, by the door, or I'll throw you out of the window.

Iron. Ha! you!—I should like to see you do it.

Sir C. Would you? you shall—this is the first little bit of excitement I've had for a very long time.

Iron. I've been waiting above a twelvemonth for this.

Sir C. [*Sparring.*] This is about the thing, I believe.

Iron. Oho! a bruiser! then here's Cornwall for you—here's a pair of pincers at your service.

Sir C. I regret that I have only a pair of tweezers to offer you in return, but you are welcome.—[*To Lady C.*] Do me the favour—[*Gives his watch to Lady C.*] Thank you, will you excuse me for a moment?—[*Leads her to c.*] I can't fight before ladies—I will be with you immediately—[*Locks her in c.*] Now, sir, since you will have it.

[*They engage.*]

Iron. Oh! his grip is like a vice!

Sir C. I could choke you, if I liked, but let us prolong the fun.

Iron. Damme—I've caught a Tartar!

[*By this time they have wheeled up to the window, &c.*]

Lady C. [*Within, ringing bell.*] Help! help!

[Ironbrace and Sir C. disappear through the window—a loud crash heard.]

Enter JAMES, L. and MARY, R.—LEECH rushes in from door R., SAVILLE unlocks C. D., and lets out Lady C.

All. [But Lady C.] What has happened?

Mary. Where is Sir Charles? } *Together.*

James. And the blacksmith?

Lady C. Oh! I don't know—out of the window!

James. Then they are drowned.

[Lady C. faints, and falls into a chair. Mary falls lifeless—general confusion.—Tableau.]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—The Interior of Wurzel's Farm House—Balustrade across, with Stairs leading to it, R.—Doors leading to Balustrade—doors at the back—door L.—Table and chairs of a rustic pattern.

WURZEL discovered seated at a table, writing, with a large register.

Wur. Joe! Joe! where can that stupid dolt be?—Mary!

Mary. [Appearing from a door above, on the balustrade, and looks over.] Yes, uncle.

Wur. What are you doing up there?

Mary. I am ironing, uncle.

Wur. A very pretty fellow that Joe is; here he has been gone above two hours.

Mary. He will be back directly, uncle; I am looking down the lane for him.

Wur. If you had not told me that Sir Charles had recommended him, I should have turned the lazy dog out a week ago.

Mary. Why, uncle, you know he brought you a letter from Sir Charles himself, which I saw the poor gentleman write on the day of that dreadful accident, three weeks ago.

Wur. A dreadful accident, indeed ! I hope it was an accident : people don't think so. It's very lucky, I think, that Sir Charles was drowned, as well as poor Ironbrace. —Baronet, as he was, he might have been hanged for the murder.

Mary. Oh, I'm sure, uncle, poor Sir Charles never meant to drown him, but the night was so dark, and there was such a fog on the river, it was impossible to give any assistance.

Wur. Well, they haven't found either of them yet, though they've been dragging the river daily ; but when they do, there'll be a crowner's quest on them, and then you'll see if they don't bring in a verdict of wilful murder against Sir Charles, that's all.

Mary. What, though he's drowned, too ?

Wur. To be sure. Justice is blind, you know, she's not to know whether he's drowned or not, and Mrs. Ironbrace, or Lady Clutterbuck, or whatever she calls herself, swears she heard Sir Charles say, he would fling the blacksmith out of the window—that shows the malice aforethought—Oh, I know the law !

Mary. Well, but uncle—

Wur. Don't tell me—go, watch for Joe, and finish your ironing.

[*Exit Mary, L.*

Enter IRONBRACE, C.—rushes to Wurzel, and throws himself into his arms.

Iron. Save me, my dear friend, save me !

Wur. Ironbrace ! not drowned ?

Iron. No.

Wur. And Sir Charles ?

Iron. Food for the fishes.

Wur. Ha ! he is dead, then !

Iron. I'm a wretch, farmer ; but I didn't mean it—it was more his fault than mine, after all. I've been wandering about the country ever since, an outcast ; I dare not return home, the police would be after me—save me.

Wur. What can I do for you ?

Iron. Hide me somewhere, that's all I ask, till the body's found, and the verdict made public.

Wur. What, here, on Sir Charles's own farm ?

Iron. This his farm ?

Wur. Yes ; and his heirs and executors are coming here this very day, to take possession of the estate.

Iron. What then ?—they won't carry it away ?

Wur. Well, my poor fellow, I'll tell you what I'll do for you—hush—[*Goes to a trap-door, c., and lifts it up.*] what do you say to that ? you'll be snug enough there.

Iron. What, in that black hole ?

Wur. I choose it, for this reason : this farm was the Manor House of the estate, and in old times these secret recesses were made for the purpose of concealing the Jacobite people, so they say—and the nook is only known to me, now old Sir Arthur Coldstream is dead.

Iron. But as I'm not a Jacobite, I'd rather—

Wur. Well, well, let me see—you can hide here in the wood-room, for the present. [*Points to L. U. E.*]

Mary. [*Opening the door above.*] Uncle ! uncle ! here's Joe, uncle.

Wur. In with you—hide behind the brambles.

Iron. I'll warrant you, I'll creep into a rat-hole, if necessary. [*Exit at door in flat, L.*]

Mary. Here's Joe, uncle—here's Joe.

[*She comes down and opens door, c.*]

Enter SIR CHARLES, in the dress of a Plough-Boy. He advances leisurely, as if weary, and flings himself on a chair, L.

Sir C. Phew !

Wur. Why, you impudent dog ! is that the way you sit down before your master ?

Sir C. No, no, it isn't that—only—oh, Lord, I'm tired to death !

Wur. A pretty plough-boy, indeed !—tired to death with a few yards.

Sir C. What do you mean by a few yards ?—half way to London and back, that's all—twelve miles, I'll bet a hundred !

Wur. Bet a hundred !—a hundred what—peas ? He talks like a gentleman ! Damn me, if he could open his mouth wider, if he were landlord of the whole estate.

Sir C. You're quite right—Mary, my dear, bring me a basin of soup.

Wur. Not a spoonful—go about your business.

Sir C. Well, but damn it!—

Mary. Hush!

Wur. What's that you say?

Sir C. Nothing, master.

Wur. If you had been home at a proper time, you would have had dinner—bacon and cabbage;—but it's all gone.

Mary. [*Aside.*] I've put you a slice by.

Sir C. You're an angel!—I'm famished—I've had nothing but a bit of brown bread and an onion, all the morning.

Wur. Well, did you deliver the letter right?

Sir C. Yes, master.

Wur. Then go and put Baldface in the cart, and take that load of hay down to Farmer Beech.

Sir C. Yes, master.

Wur. And bring back a load of lime for the corner field.

Sir C. Yes, master.—[*To Mary.*] I suppose I must go.

Mary. Yes, Joe.

Sir C. I'm nearly done up. Please mayn't I take a lump of bread and cheese to eat, by the road.

Wur. Not a crumb, you gluttonous rascal; get out!

Sir C. That's the way I'm treated.—[*Aside.*] *Mary*, dear, crib me a bit, and throw it out of the window.—I'm going, master—oh, *quel inexorable condition—sacre bleu!*

Wur. What outlandish Welsh are you jabbering there, you stupid bumpkin! Follow me, sloth; and unless you want to feel the cart whip, be quick. [*Exit, c.*]

Sir C. Very pleasant, upon my soul! The respect I meet with from my farmers, is quite delightful!

Mary. I won't be an instant with the soup—I've kept it hot on the copper; it was washing day.—It does my heart good to see you so gay—I won't be a moment!

[*Exit, l.*]

Sir C. Gay! it's quite true, I am gay—it's a melancholy thing to reflect upon, but I certainly *am* gay, and yet how can it be?—I work like a nigger, and yet I'm as hearty as a buck! When I was—what I was—that is, when I was myself—my table loaded with all the luxuries of the season, I could not eat;—the most exquisite wines, and yet I could not drink—I was a puny weakling. Now

I drink nothing but spring water, and I drink like a fish; and as for digestion, it's positively horrible to think how I digest—I must have the stomach of an ostrich.—It's curious—very curious, I haven't a moment to myself, yet I never feel *ennui*, I'm never bored—I'm never languid;—I breathe—I live again—I exist! It's a very curious thing!

Enter MARY, L., with soup.

Mary. Here's the soup!

Sir C. Oh, what a thimble-full!—why, here isn't a pint and a half, I'm sure!

Mary. Yes—but there's the bacon coming.

Sir C. And the cabbage—he said there was cabbage.

Mary. So there is, but do make haste—excuse me, Sir Charles.

Sir C. Hush!—you forget I'm Joe.

Mary. Then, Joe.

Sir C. Dear Joe, if you like.

Mary. Then, dear Joe!

Sir C. There's a darling!

Mary. When you speak to my uncle, try not to use the language of gentlemen—but be a plough-boy in thought.

Sir C. I am, in appetite. [*Eating voraciously.*]

Mary. You see, I stole you a piece of nice white bread; I made it myself. Oh, I like to see you here so much better than at your fine house. I wish I could render this hard life more agreeable to you.

Sir C. 'Tis beautiful! [*Tasting soup.*]

Mary. Can you think so?

Sir C. Too much pepper!

Mary. Your life?

Sir C. No, the soup. As for my position, there's but one thing that hangs like a blight over my life: I've destroyed that of a fellow-creature—that horrible blacksmith haunts me like the statue of Don Juan—do you know the opera?

Mary. No, dear Joe.

Sir C. In white marble.

Mary. No.

Sir C. Mozart's music.—Well, the figure of the wretched blacksmith, he stands between me and my rest—Hush!—why, 'twas only two nights ago I heard a noise—looked round—beside me stood—

Mary. Ironbrace!

Sir C. He!—he uttered a hollow moan;—I gasped for breath—stooped my head to put out the horrid vision, and rushed towards the spectre.

Mary. It was a dream.

Sir C. Not at all, for I broke my head against him or something.

Mary. But, after all, you are not guilty—it was only an accident!

Sir C. I know it; but my conscience conjures up dreadful things;—at night, I see figures—hear voices denouncing me.

Mary. Oh, if I had not paid your steward the £20 I owed him, you might have left the country with it.

Sir C. I don't want to leave the country; I am happy here; besides, *Mary*, did you remark yesterday, that I pressed your hand?

Mary. No, I didn't.

Sir C. I did—I pressed it.—[*Gets up.*] Fly the country, indeed!—no, *Mary*, I could not leave you.

Mary. I have nothing to fear; they wouldn't hang me for concealing you, would they?

Sir C. Would you wish me, then, to go?

Mary. To go—to—no—but—no—I could not—do not—go, unless, perhaps, you would fly to her you love.

Sir C. Her I love!—[*Approaches her.*] *Mary*, do you know there's something very remarkable going on here?

Mary. [*Looking round.*] Where?

Sir C. No, not there—here! [*Touching his heart.*]

Mary. What is it?

Sir C. I'll tell you all—

Mary. Hush! [*Mary puts bowl off, L.*]

Enter WURZEL, c.

Wur. Joe, Joe, quick, they are here! set the place to rights;—the lawyer is coming, Mr. Fennel, and the gentlemen.

Mary. What gentlemen, uncle?

Wur. The heirs and executors!

Sir C. [*Aside.*] The devil take 'em.—[*Aloud.*] What heirs-at-law?

Wur. The heirs of Sir Charles Coldstream, who is head, of course.

Sir C. What!

Wur. What's the matter with that fool!—don't you know that Sir Charles is dead, blockhead?

Sir C. Oh, yes, poor devil!

Wur. What do you mean, then?

Sir C. Nothing, master.

[Going.

Wur. Stop, you idle dog, you are always going when work begins.

Mary. [Aside.] He will be recognized.

Sir C. The letters I took, then, this morning—

Wur. Were to appoint his heirs and executors, here, to divide the property.

Sir C. [Aside.] I only wanted that to complete me—I shall have to assist at my own cutting up.

Wur. Here they are.

Sir C. [Aside.] Will they penetrate this disguise?

Enter FENNEL, LEECH, and SAVILLE, c.

Wur. Welcome, gentlemen. There, Mary—Joe, you dog, place chairs—make haste, you lazy villain!

Sir C. Yes, master. [He places chairs awkwardly—running against each person, hiding his face.]

Wur. Idle vagabond!

Sir C. Yes, master.

Wur. And one at the table, for Mr. Fennel, too. [He does so, and goes R.] Excuse this awkward booby—he's only a clod—has no idea above sheep washing.

Fen. Don't mention it. To business, gentlemen.—Ahem! Gentlemen, Sir Charles Coldstream is dead.

All. Hear! hear!

Sir C. The butchers!

Fen. The law says it; and, indeed, if he were alive, the law would make him dead, for the law never lies. He would have a bad cause to defend;—so, although his body has not been found, I believe he may be considered dead to all intents and purposes.

All. Dead, decidedly!

Sir C. [Aside.] Dead as a door nail!—carried, *nem. con.*

Leech. Every thing's for the best—his temper was perfectly insupportable!

Sir C. [Aside.] Good. Go on!

Sav. Proud as Lucifer!

Sir C. [Aside.] Beautiful! Go on!

Leech. Unfit for our society altogether!

Sir C. [Aside.] In that I perfectly coincide.

Fen. Gentlemen, this sealed will was found amongst the papers of the defunct.

Sir C. [Aside.] Here present.

Fen. The formula is perfect; after, it then proceeds—
“I leave to Sir Adonis Leech, Capitalist—

Leech. Ha!

Mary. [To Sir C.] Capitalist! is he rich, then?

Sir C. Not a penny—he inhabits the Capital.

Fen. “My estates in Scotland. To the Honourable Thomas Saville, and the said Adonis Leech, my estates at Windsor, to be divided equally between them,”—the rest he leaves to his heir-presumptive—a distant relative.

Sav. Well, this is the only reasonable act in his life.

Leech. Except his death—ha! ha!

Sir C. [Aside.] Damn his impudence!

Sav. He never enjoyed his money.

Leech. We did, for him.

Sav. He was a great ass!

Sir C. [Aside.] 'Pon my soul, this is pleasant!

[Takes out snuff-box.

Sav. Well, Farmer, at what do you value this property?

Wur. Not much, sir. Sir Charles said to me, Wurzel, my dear fellow—

Sir C. [Aside.] The old scoundrel! never saw him in my life, before I came here.

Wur. I must reduce your rent.

Sir C. What a thumper!

Wur. What's that you say?

Sav. Let us view the estate; and suppose we begin with this house: come, Farmer, shew us the premises—what's this? [Goes to the door where Ironbrace is concealed.

Wur. [Aside.] The devil! Ironbrace is there!—[Aloud.] I have not the keys with me, gentlemen—I will find them against you return. There, Joe, shew these gentlemen over the farm.

Sir C. Me!

Mary. Stay here, I'll go with them—this way, gentlemen.
[Exit, L.

Wur. Now to let out the blacksmith.

[Exit into wood-house, L. F.]

Sir C. So, these are heirs-apparent!—very pretty treatment towards a poor defunct gentleman, who has left them every thing! It's enough to disgust any man with drowning himself for the rest of his life. But I won't stand it.—Oh, if I wasn't dead—I'd—stay—ha!—I have it—THE WILL!—here's a brilliant idea!—[Runs to table and writes.] So, a *codicil* on the reverse page—signed—so—now my friends—date—let's see, on what day was I drowned?—on the 20th—so—the 19th—ah!—there! By the bye, there must be two witnesses, let me see—Paul Jones and Jack Robinson.

Re-enter WURZEL L. D. F., with IRONBRACE.

Wur. Now to—ha! Joe!—[Shuts door on Ironbrace quickly,] what do you here?

Sir C. Me, master!

Wur. You, you dog!—to work, sirrah, to work!

Sir C. Ah! I'm going.—[Aside.] Oh, if ever I live to be alive again, I'll double your rent, you old rascal!

[Exit up stairs.—Wurzel opens door, L. F.]

Wur. Here, Ironbrace, quick!

Enter IRONBRACE, L. D. F.

You must get down into the secret cellars, they will be back in a moment.

Iron. It's devilish dark!—you will let me out again?

Wur. Yes, yes, but haste.

Iron. You'll bring me something to eat?

Wur. Every moment is full of danger—make no noise—quick! [They lift trap, c., and Ironbrace descends.]

Iron. I say, that young ploughman of yours is after your niece—take my advice, and—

Wur. [Slamming down the trap.] They are here.

Enter FENNEL, LEECH, and SAVILLE, L.

Sav. I say it shall be.

Leech. Shall!—Mr. Saville, I have as much right to that expression as yourself.

Sav. Then I'll take legal opinion, sir.

Leech. Take what you like, but you don't take more than a just half.

Fen. [*Who has been looking over the will.*] Gentlemen, gentlemen, you needn't trouble yourselves to quarrel—look here, is it possible I could have overlooked it?

All. What!

Fen. A codicil, upon the reverse page.

All. A codicil!

Fen. Dated the 19th—the day before his death.—
[*Reads.*] “*As I may do something desperate to-morrow, I hereby annul all my former bequests, and leave my entire real and personal estates to Mary Wurzel, who I hereby constitute my sole heiress.*”

Wur. My niece!

All. [*But Fennel.*] This is a fraud!

Fen. It is in the handwriting of the defunct, and part of the same deed, which made you his legatees. If part is fraud, all is fraud. [*They all look over the will.*]

Enter MARY, L. S. E., with a tray bearing wine, &c.

Mary. Allow me, gentlemen, to invite you—here is some fresh cream, and brown bread, and strawberries.

Sav. [*Aside.*] Ha! a pretty girl! I may regain the fortune.

Leech. [*Aside.*] The heiress!—I'll try my luck—why not?—I've lost the legacy, but the girl is attackable—here goes.

Fen. [*Aside.*] I was married last week!

Sav. [*To Mary.*] I cannot permit one so lovely to serve me.

Leech. [*On the other side.*] Miss Mary, might I beg a look—a—

Mary. What does this mean?

Sav. This is disgusting, Sir Adonis Leech.—Never mind, my dear, allow me—

Leech. The nectar must be delicious, which is served by so charming a Hebe.

Mary. Nectar!—Hebe!—what do you both mean?

Wur. Mean?—why that you are sole heiress to Sir Charles Coldstream's fortune.

Mary. H [*Suddenly leaves the tray between Sir Adonis and Saville.*]

Wur. So, now you will leave your old uncle.

Mary. Leave you, never!—[*Crosses to him.*] But heiress! am I his heiress?

Fen. I was Sir Charles's man of business—will you honour me with your orders?

Wur. Only assure me that you will not marry.

All. Cruel! not marry? what barbarity!

Mary. Where's Joe?—Joe!

Leech. Who the devil is Joe?

Wur. My plough-boy!

Sav. She's in love with him.

Enter SIR CHARLES at back.

Sir C. [*Aside.*] So, the fun's begun, it seems.

Mary. [*Aside.*] Here he comes—they'll recognize him.
[*Aloud.*] Love him? nonsense!—love Joe—a common plough-boy?—besides, he is not worth a shilling, while I'm an heiress!

Sir C. [*Aside.*] Ha!—just in time—*Et tu brute!*

Mary. An ugly clod!

Sir C. Go on.

Mary. A sulky bumpkin!

Sir C. [*Aside.*] Don't spare me, I'm used to it.

Mary. I certainly might have cast my eyes upon him, when I was only a dairy-maid;—but now—oh, no!

Sir C. Can wealth so poison the purest heart?—what a precious world we live in!

Mary. Gentlemen, I must consider your claims—you are both deserving; but if I must choose a husband at once—

All. Undoubtedly!

Mary. Permit me a few minutes' reflection alone.

Wur. This way, gentlemen. [*Exeunt Fennel, Leech, and Saville, L. As they are going out, each turns to get a look at Mary;—Sir Adonis returns, kisses his hand, and exits, followed by Wurzel, who returns.*] Don't give up your liberty. There is not one of them but would spend your fortune in three weeks, and you would be deserted before the honeymoon was out. Promise me that you will never marry, but will always remain with your poor uncle.

Mary. I promise nothing at present—wait here a moment for my decision. Now to find Sir Charles. [*Exit, c.*

SIR C., who has hidden himself on the stairs, comes down and seizes Wurzel, who is going.

Wur. What do you want, Joe? are you mad?

Sir C. I am nearly.

Wur. Mad!—what does the fool mean?

Sir C. There's no longer any fool in the case—excuse me for saying so in your presence. Listen to me, old Wurzel.

Wur. Old!

Sir C. Ay, old as the hills—superannuated!

Wur. Me!—I am dumb with astonishment!

Sir C. Consent at once to your niece's marrying whom she pleases, or I'll break every bone in your body.

Wur. What!

Sir C. We are alone here.

Wur. Well!

Sir C. You are not strong.

Wur. And would you take advantage of a feeble old man?

Sir C. Oh, what, you are old now, are you?

[*Seizes him.*

Wur. Stay, Joe; you're a good lad, I believe.

Sir C. I am.

Wur. Brave.

Sir C. Very.

Wur. But rather—

Sir C. Exactly.

Wur. I consent to any thing you wish.

Sir C. Honour!

Wur. Honour! there's no resisting you.

Sir C. I know it. Now you must forbid those gentlemen thinking of her.

Wur. But, my dear Joe, how can I?

Sir C. [*Seizing him.*] That's your affair.

Wur. Well, well, I promise—there.

Sir C. Now you may go.

Wur. There's a good lad.—[*Aside.*] The rascal! I'll trounce him for this. Good bye, Joe.

Sir C. Good bye. [*Exit Wurzel, l., shaking his fist*

behind Sir Charles's back.] Ungrateful girl! on whom I lavished riches—whom I loved! Now, indeed, I feel the lack of that existence, which I thought I experienced when I was wealthy.

Enter MARY, seeing him, c.

Mary. Oh, my dear Joe, what an excellent idea it was to think of disinheriting those wretches.

Sir C. Indeed! do you think so?

Mary. I saw you coming, and feared for your detection. Believe me, Joe, I will most jealously guard your fortune—

Sir C. I've no doubt.

Mary. 'Till means can be found to restore it to you. You can now escape, and gain some foreign country—live free, free!

Sir C. What!

Mary. If I do not seem happy at the thought of your departure—

Sir C. Why, Mary, did you understand, then, that I merely transferred my fortune to your hands for my own use?

Mary. Of course—but fly at once—leave me—

Sir C. Say, before I go, that you love me.

Mary. Love you!

Sir C. You do?

Mary. We shall be overheard.

Sir C. Then here I stop forever.

Mary. Well, then, I do.

Sir C. She loves me, she loves me! [*Embraces her, and feels his pulse.*] But you love me for myself, not for dinners?—[*Aside.*] How could she—she never was at any of 'em?

Mary. They are coming—what shall I do? they will expect me to choose a husband.

Sir C. Very well, choose me. [*She turns to him, he seizes her in his arms, and kisses her.*]

Re-enter SAVILLE, LEECH, and FENNEL, l.

Sav. Well, fair lady.

Leech. Have you made your choice?

All. [*Seeing Sir Charles embracing her.*] Hollo!

Mary. Permit me, gentlemen, to introduce my future husband.

Sav. Why, surely—

Leech. Tom!

Sav. Leech!

Leech & Sav. It's Sir Charles, himself!

Fen. The defunct!

Sir C. Yes, gentlemen.

Leech. Not dead?

Sir C. No, I am not, lucky for me; and if I were, I should consider it my imperative duty to re-visit you.—
[*Leech and Saville approach to shake hands.*] Avaunt!—
Begone, Vampires!

Fen. [*Crosses to him, c.*] Sir Charles Coldstream, excuse me—your position when you were dead, was a most excellent one, but—

Sir C. [*Aside.*] The devil! I forgot the damned blacksmith.

Fen. But since you are alive—

Sir C. But I am not! I'm dead—dead as a door nail—dead in law!

Fen. My duty is to secure your person.

Mary. Heavens!

Sir C. What for?

Fen. Additional evidence has been found against you to-day.

Sir C. To-day!—by whom?

Fen. By yourself. Listen:—"John Ironbrace was drowned on the 20th of August"—

Sir C. Well—

Fen. On the 19th, you write in your will—"As it is more than probable that to-morrow"—I regret to state, that you are in an awkward position.

All. Oh!

Sir C. I've done it now, that's certain—committed suicide in spite of myself.

Leech. But Mr. Fennel, surely—

Fen. Gentlemen—I must trouble you to clear the room; it shall be guarded until the arrival of the Rural Police. Farmer Wurzel's now gone for them.

Mary. My dear Joe!

Sir C. I am stunned,—that damned codicil ! a happy idea !

Mary. And I have been the cause ! But, I will save him still. [*As she goes up, places the c. Table, R.*]

Fen. Come, madam. [*Exeunt all but Sir C.—at c. the door is shut and bolted.*]

Sir C. It's—it's all over with me !—just as happiness was at last within my grasp—I wish you a good morning—it faded like a spectre from my arms. Poor Mary, 'tis for her sake I suffer. Night is closing in ; I shall be left alone here ; solitude is hateful to me—since a certain event—especially in the dark :—then the spectre rises up before me—a candle end—a sad emblem ! we shall last about the time—unhappy analogy !—is there no means of escape ? none !—Stay—surely—yes—I remember my old nurse—Mary's mother—used to tell me tales of this very house—the old Manor House—of the subterranean passages that were underneath the hall, to conceal Jacobites in the rebellion—the hall !—this must be it. [*Searches about floor.*—if I could hit on the entrance—stay, here is something like—let's try—yes, it moves—it is—[*Opens the trap, c.*] how devilish dark and cold—it's anything but inviting—no matter, I'll go down uninvited. [*Goes down a step, and comes up again.*] I tremble every limb—the idea of a blacksmith not knowing how to swim—it's perfectly ridiculous ! [*Exit down trap, c.*] Help ! help !—get out—ho ! [*They are heard beneath.*]

Iron. Ha !—dog !—assassin ! Oh, Lord !—oh, dear !

[*After much confused noise, Sir Charles lifts up the trap, leaps out, stamps it down, and stands on it.*]

Sir C. Oh, Lord !—he's there ! I've seen him !—I've seen his ghost—there was a rusty smoky smell about it—I felt the ghost of his arms seize me—I heard the ghost of his voice call me assassin ! through the dim twilight I saw his blue features glaring on me ; and then we began just such an infernal waltz, as that which preceded our last water excursion—round we spun in the dark, until at last—oh, Lord, the thought !—I dealt him a severe punch on the ghost of his head—oh, fate, what hast thou next in store for me ! [*Ironbrace lifts a trap, R.*]

Iron. So, I'm out, at last.

Sir C. No, you don't. [*Rushes to trap, slams it on him,*

and sits on it.] Horrors accumulate on me—oh, if this is only the force of my imagination, I wish it would take another subject to amuse itself with. [*Ironbrace raises a trap, L.*]

Iron. Shall I ever get out of this?

Sir C. Never! [*Runs over and slams the trap down.*] He has as many holes in the house as a rabbit warren!

Iron. [*Raises trap in c.*] Here's another!

Sir C. [*Slams it down.*] Down!—down, perturbed spirit!—the ground's drilled like a cullender! What shall I do? I only drowned one, after all, not fifty—I'm on a volcano—an eruption of blacksmiths! [*Noise without, c.*] Here comes the Police—I won't go—I won't be taken—they shan't remove me—I'm part of the fixtures. I'll stay here in spite of the universe.

Enter WURZEL, SAVILLE, LEECH, FENNEL, and MARY, c.

Mary. Where is he? where is Sir Charles?

Leech & Sav. Where is our dear friend?

Wur. Sir Charles, my dear landlord, you are free.

Sir C. Free!

Wur. Ironbrace is preserved.

Sir C. Yes, in spirits—Euh!

Wur. He is no more drowned than you are—see!

[*Goes to lift trap, c.*]

Sir C. Don't—don't! he's there—I saw him—it's his ghost!

Wur. His ghost? nonsense! I'll let him out, dead or alive!

[*Lifts c. trap, and Ironbrace ascends.*]

Iron. Alive, if it's all the same to you.

Sir C. Alive!—are you quite sure? Let me touch you—oh, by Jove, my good friend, you have no idea how pleased I am to see you—give me your hand.

Iron. There it is—I'm glad enough to see you alive, too, I can tell you.

Sir C. Are you pretty well? I've often thought of you—[*Aside.*] Well, I thought it was very dirty for a ghost.

Leech. What happiness to recover our friend.

Sav. Joy! joy! [*They cross to him.*]

Sir C. Joy, indeed, my good friends; and as I am sure you would not like it to be incomplete, do me one favour.

Leech & Sav. Anything, my dear Sir Charles!

Sir C. Never let me see your faces again.

Leech & Sav. What!

Leech. A man of no refinement!

Sav. A perfect brute!

Leech. Sir Charles, I have the honour—perhaps, when you feel bored with your own company, we shall hear from you.

Sir C. I promise that.

Sav. We shall hear from him to-morrow.

Leech. To-day!

Sir C. Never! and now, with the wisdom and good sense peculiar to Englishmen, who have fought, I will explain:—I never saw your wife in my life, till the moment you found us together.

Iron. No!

Sir C. Consequently, your fury was mis-directed.—Would you know the proper object for your vengeance?

Iron. I should—hammer and tongs!

Sir C. There he stands! [*Points to Leech, who runs off, L.*] Don't trouble yourself, he's not worth caring for.

Iron. You're right: nothing's worth caring for, I believe—the world's a bad one.

Sir C. Psha, man!—don't talk nonsense: the world's a beautiful world, if people will but think so; isn't it, Mary?

Mary. Yes; but when people run too much after excitement, they may chance to get more than they bargain for.

Sir C. I am a living instance; but my sufferings are now repaid, thanks to the disinterested affection of an artless girl. I've found within this lowly farm what I've sought in vain amidst the dissipation of Europe—a home—yes, I've had a good lesson—a man's happiness, after all, lies within himself—with employment for the mind, exercise for the body, a domestic hearth, and a mind at ease, there is but one thing wanting to complete his happiness—the approbation of his friends, without which there is nothing in it.

DISPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERS AT THE FALL OF
THE CURTAIN.

IRONBRACK.

SIR C.

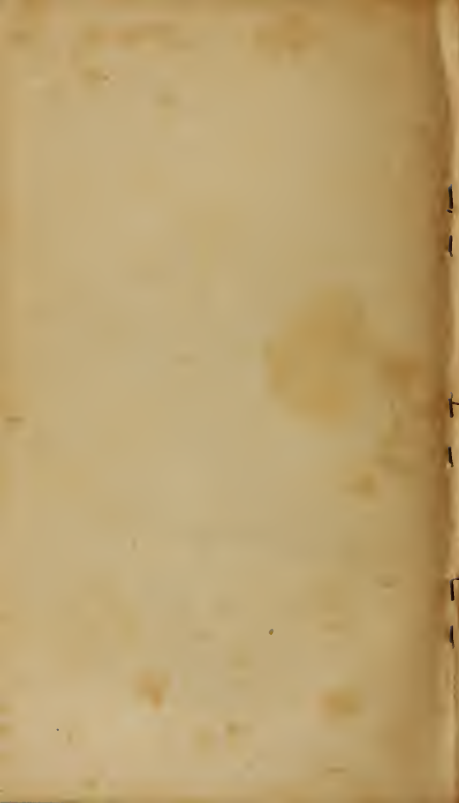
MARY.

WURZEL.

SAVILLE

THE END.







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